

THE COURT THAT TAMED THE WEST: A HISTORY OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT FOR NORTHERN CALIFORNIA 1850 – 2005



The Court That Tamed the West is the story of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California whose 155 years of rulings have shaped California into the sixth largest economy in the world. From the Gold Rush of the 1850s to the Internet boom of 2000, the Northern California District Court has had a profound effect on how business is done and life is lived on the Pacific Coast. During the court's founding years, California had just been admitted to the Union as the 31st state and the East was being ripped apart by the Civil War. But California pioneers were busy prospecting for new fortunes, building towns and cities--and suing each other. San Francisco was the epicenter of a litigious new world being cobbled from gold dust and sand dunes. The court's decisions set the tone for the nascent state's development and commerce, from deciding the fate of the valuable Spanish and Mexican land grants to establishing civil rights for sailors and Chinese immigrants. Through the era of Prohibition and the Labor Movement to World War II and the tumultuous '60s and '70s, the court's historic rulings have affected the Bay Area's geography, culture, and commerce. For most of the Nineteenth Century, the Northern District Court was the sole federal court for all of California. Today, the Northern District Court encompasses the central and northern coast, from Monterey to Del Norte counties. As California continues to influence the world, so the Northern District Court continues to shape the state's evolution.